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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF COTTER CORPORATION'S PROPOSED PAPOOSE LIMESTONE MINE SECOND EXPANSION SAN JUAN COUNTY, UTAH

LAC REPORT 2001-27

by

Steven L. Fuller

LA PLATA ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANTS
26851 COUNTY ROAD P
DOLORES, COLORADO 81323
(970) 565-8708

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Prepared For:
Cotter Corporation
P.O. Box 700
Nucla, Colorado 81424

ABSTRACT

The archaeological survey of Cotter Corporation's proposed Papoose Limestone Mine Second Expansion was conducted by personnel of La Plata Archaeological Consultants on May 10, 2001. The project is located in San Juan County, Utah, on lands owned and managed by the Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration. A rectangular block, approximately 2150 feet long by 500 feet wide (24.7 acres), was surveyed to allow for the expansion of the existing limestone mine. No archaeological sites or other cultural resources were encountered during the survey and archaeological clearance is recommended for the project.

INTRODUCTION

On May 10, 2001, the archaeological survey of Cotter Corporation's proposed Papoose Limestone Mine Second Expansion was conducted by Steve Fuller of La Plata Archaeological Consultants. The survey was requested by John Showalter of Cotter Corporation.

The proposed mine expansion is located entirely on lands managed by the Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration. The project is within San Juan County, Utah, about six miles south of the town of La Sal and near the divide between the heads of Lisbon Valley to the east and Big Indian Wash to the west (Figure 1). The project is west of the County Road between Lisbon Valley and La Sal.

The proposed mine expansion is within T29.5S, R24E, Section 36, E ½ SW¼ and W ½ SE ¼, and is included on the USGS Lisbon Valley, Utah 7.5' series topographic map (Figure 2). The Papoose Limestone mine was first developed in 1994 (Fuller 1994) and then expanded to the southeast in 1995 (Fuller 1995). The second expansion, covered in this report, begins at the current mining area and extends southeastward and includes a rectangular parcel approximately 2100 feet long by 400 feet wide, plus a 50 ft buffer zone on the three undeveloped sides (see Figure 2). A small portion of this area map overlap with the archaeological survey previously conducted for the first mine expansion examined in 1995 (Fuller 1995). No archaeological sites or other items of cultural interest were encountered during the survey. Archaeological clearance is recommended for the Papoose Limestone Mine Second Expansion.

PHYSIOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT

The proposed mine expansion traverses a fairly steep west facing slope overlooking the upper end of Big Indian Wash. The project area is typified by exposed limestone bedrock which is highly fractured, weathered, and blocky. A thin layer of reddish silty wind-blown sediment covers portions of the limestone with depths ranging from 0 to maybe 25 cm. The limestone is dense and uniform with no areas of apparent chert nodules. The limestone is a member of the Pennsylvanian Age Hermosa Formation.

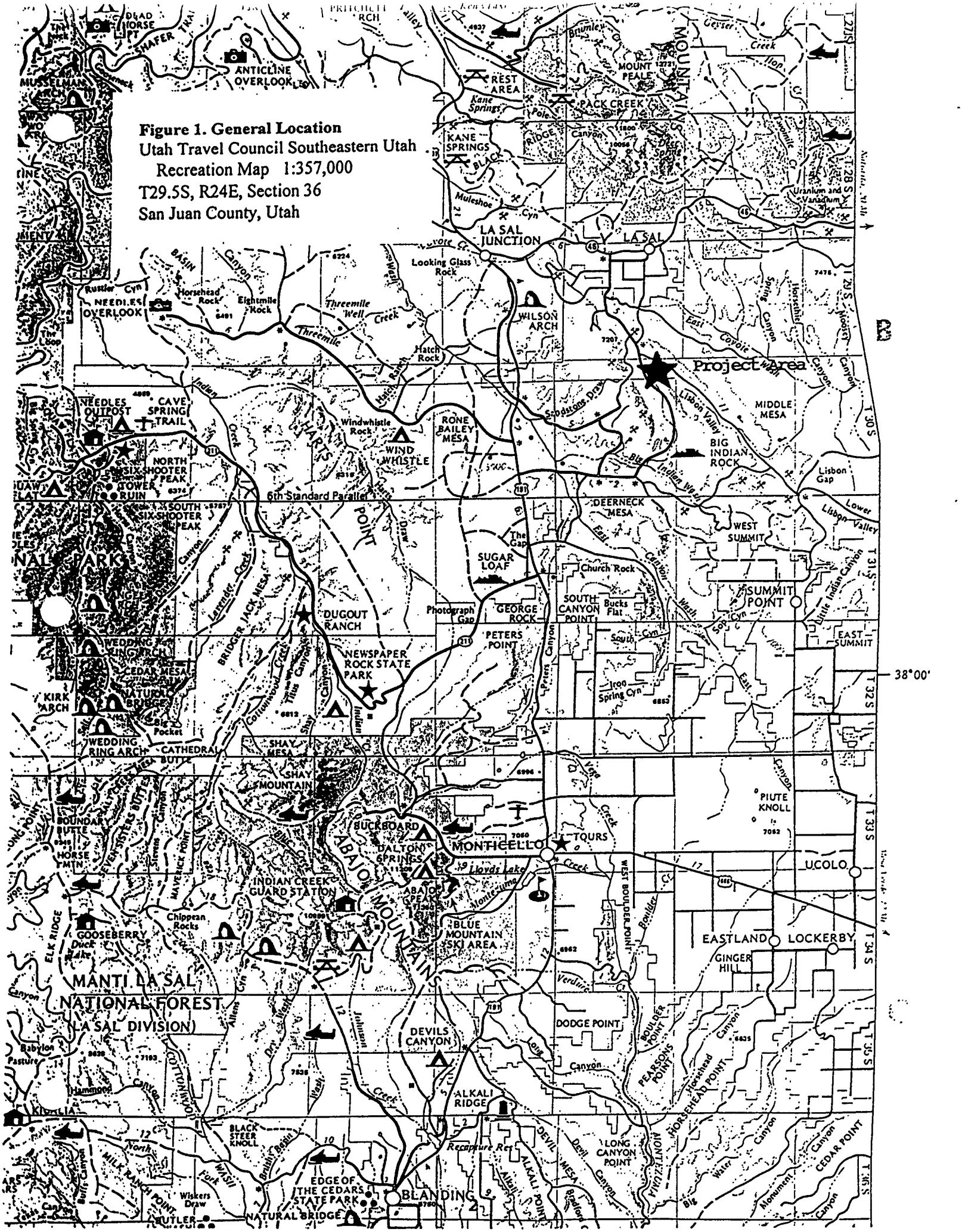

Figure 1. General Location
Utah Travel Council Southeastern Utah Recreation Map 1:357,000
T29.5S, R24E, Section 36
San Juan County, Utah

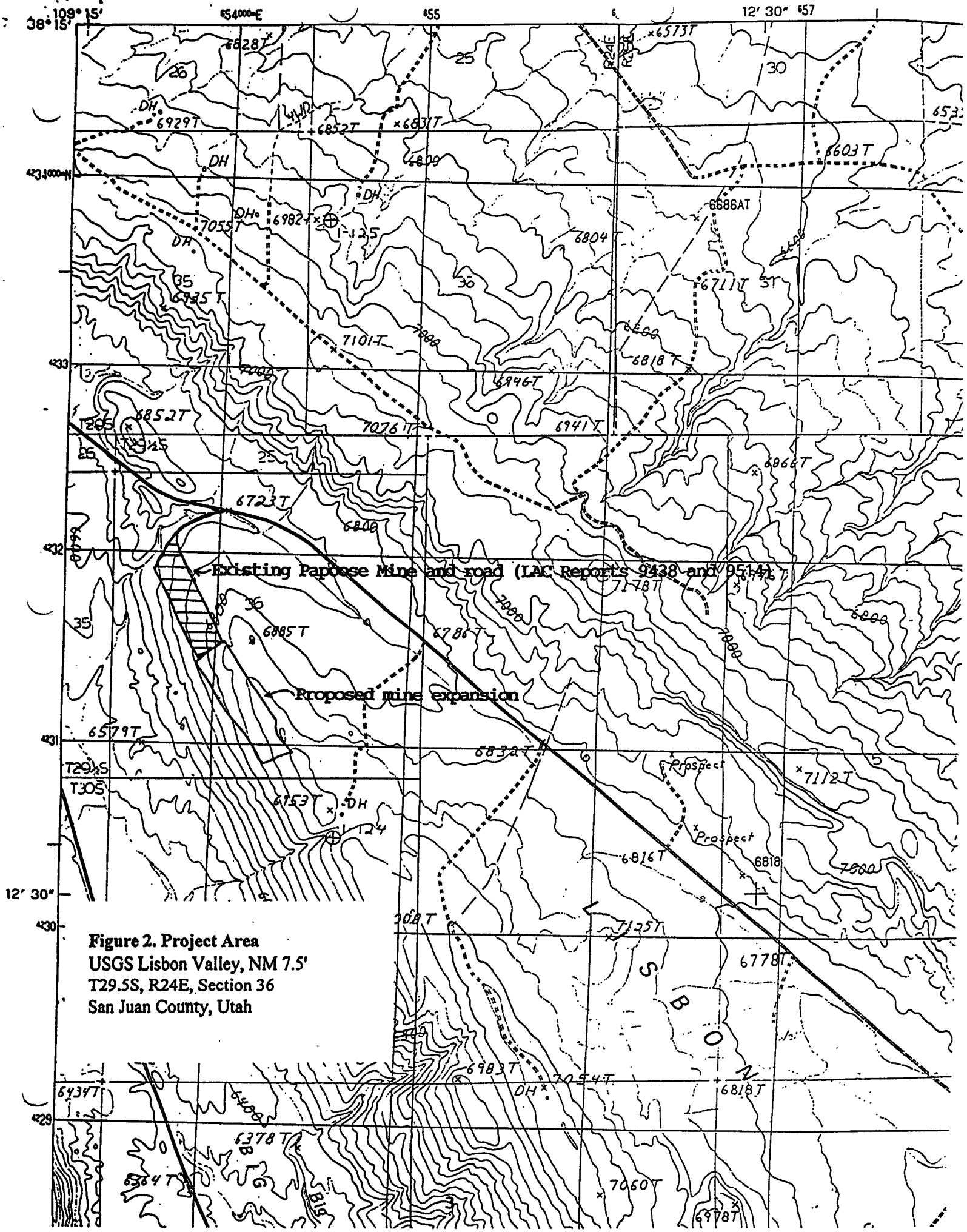

Figure 2. Project Area
USGS Lisbon Valley, NM 7.5'
T29.5S, R24E, Section 36
San Juan County, Utah

Vegetation within the project area consists mainly of unchained pinyon and juniper with a generally sparse understory of ephedra, broad and narrowleaf yucca, snakeweed, and grasses.

SURVEY PROCEDURES

The files located at the Utah Division of State History were checked by telephone in May, 2001, by La Plata Archaeological Consultants and Utah Division of State History personnel. Previous records searches of the same area conducted in 1994 and 1995 indicated that several archaeological surveys have been conducted in the vicinity of the project area, mostly for seismic lines. There is only one previously recorded site in the vicinity of the project area. The site, 42SA11460 (Harden 1982), is a large lithic scatter with ground stone tools located about 1000 feet or more to the southwest of the proposed mine expansion.

Utah Division of State History files also indicate that the Morrison Formation outcrops in the area and that large vertebrate fossils may be encountered. The Morrison Formation may be exposed on the east side of Lisbon Valley, about one mile east of the project area, but that area is separated by the Lisbon Fault from this project area. Much earlier Pennsylvanian Age limestone dominates the project area and no significant vertebrate fossils would be expected.

The block survey of the proposed mine expansion and buffers was conducted by a single archaeologist who walked a rectilinear pattern of parallel transects spaced about 15 or so meters apart. A total of 24.7 acres were inventoried for cultural resources for this project.

SURVEY RESULTS

No archaeological sites or other cultural resources were encountered during this survey, nor were any cultural resources encountered during the previous two surveys in this immediate area..

CONCLUSIONS AND MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The archaeological survey for Cotter Corporation's proposed Papoose Limestone Mine Second Expansion was conducted on May 10, 2001, by personnel of La Plata Archaeological Consultants. The project is located on lands managed by the State of Utah. No archaeological sites or other cultural resources were encountered during the project and archaeological clearance is recommended for the proposed mine expansion.

REFERENCES

Fuller, Steven L.

1994 *Archaeological Survey of Cotter Corporation's Proposed Papoose Limestone Mine and Access Road, San Juan County, Utah.* LAC Report 9438. La Plata Archaeological Consultants, Dolores.

1995 *Archaeological Survey of Cotter Corporation's Proposed Papoose Limestone Mine Expansion, San Juan County, Utah.* LAC Report 9514. La Plata Archaeological Consultants, Dolores.

Harden, Patrick L.

1982 *Archaeological Survey of Seisdata's Seismic Lines in the Lisbon Valley Area, San Juan County, Utah.* LAC Report 8227. La Plata Archaeological Consultants, Dolores.